

World Trade Institute (WTI)

History and Mandate

The World Trade Institute was founded in 1999. Its mission is training and research on trade and investment regulation, and on the general management of the global economy. As a centre of excellence at the University of Bern, the WTI explores the interconnections between the fields of law, economics and political science. It is a leading academic institution dedicated to **research, studies, teaching, and outreach** in the areas of:

- Trade
- Investment
- Sustainability

Vision:

- We aim to **shape public policy** so that international economic governance yields tangible benefits for society
- We strive to be the **world's leading academic institution** for studies, teaching and research in **international trade and investment regulation** and **economic globalisation and sustainability**

Mission:

- We are a **centre of excellence** at the University of Bern
- We contribute to a better understanding of **the legal, economic and political framework governing globalisation and sustainable development**
- We provide **cutting-edge research** and **scholarly outputs** on frontier topics
- We attract **top graduate students from around the world** and give them the knowledge and skills to become tomorrow's leaders in the field of international economic governance

Research

From 2005-2017, research at the WTI focused on the **NCCR Trade Regulation** project financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). As the leading house of the NCCR Trade Regulation, the WTI has developed into a highly respected research centre in the area of trade governance and trade-related areas (investment, migration, climate change) in Europe and beyond.

As the WTI moves forward post-NCCR, its thematic coverage still includes trade and investment, with an increased focus on related policy fields from a sustainability perspective. The institute hosts two SNSF research professors working at the intersection between migration and climate change, as well as on emerging economies.

Current projects related to *trade* include: **PRONTO**, which explores regulatory barriers to trade; and a project exploring pertinent trade rules that impinge on **Big Data**.

Under *investment*, the **BRICS** project investigates foreign direct investment, workers' rights, and labour market institutions in selected developing countries.

In terms of *sustainability*, the WTI is home to a new four-year project within the SNSF NRP **Sustainable Economy** to develop publicly available indicators of sustainability footprints at the canton-level for Switzerland. Related post-NCCR projects on the legal side include climate-driven migration: the legal potential of the emerging doctrine of **Common Concern of Humankind**; the **Climate Security with Local Authorities (CLISEL)** project, which investigates the climate-security nexus from the perspective of local administrations and communities; and the **CLI_M_CO2** project that addresses 'sinking islands' in the South Pacific to propose a new approach to migration governance and state responsibility.

Education

The Master of International Law and Economics (MILE) was the first educational offer of the WTI. Established in 1999, it remains synonymous with the institute, although it is now one of a range of programmes offered. In 2012, the WTI launched a **doctoral programme** as part of the Graduate School of Economic Globalisation and Integration, which grew to include 28 students in 2017. In 2017 the WTI held its 15th **Summer Academy** on International Law and Economics, drawing in students from around the world.

Together with the Faculty of Law of the University of Bern, the institute recently created the **TRAIL+** advanced master's programme in Trade and Investment Law that combines courses in International Law and Economics (LL.M. in International Trade and Investment Law) with a Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) in International Law and Economics. The WTI also offers '**Courses à la Carte**' leading to a DAS or a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in International Law and Economics.

Outreach

We have set ourselves four interconnected goals:

- Increase the global number and quality of international cooperation agreements (academic, think tanks, private sector)
- Provide a focused list of training offers and courses on trade and investment
- Applied research on behalf of and advice to public and private sector clients
- Share output externally and enhance participation in policy discussions and debates. This includes hosting an annual World Trade Forum in partnership with the European Institute in Florence.

Facts and Figures

- Home Institution: University of Bern
(The WTI is formally assigned to the Faculty of Law and interacts with the Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences.)
- Established: 1999
- Managing Director: Prof. Joseph Francois
- Deputy Director: Prof. Manfred Elsig
- Director of Studies: Prof. Peter Van den Bossche
- Managing Director, Institute of European and International Economic Law (IEW): Prof. Michael Hahn

Funding

The Institute is funded by the University of Bern for its infrastructure and for approximately one-fifth of its running expenses. Approximately four-fifths of the budget comes from external and project-based funding (research grants, teaching fees, consulting, and training activities).

Employees

Currently 40 researchers in-house – including professors, post-doctoral researchers, doctoral students and junior research fellows – plus a dozen administrative staff.